

CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.
President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER SIX

THE OFFERINGS UPON THE BRAZEN ALTAR

Christ — Our Offering on Calvary's Cross
Leviticus 1:1-7:38

THE BRAZEN altar just inside the tabernacle gate would have been of no avail without the offerings presented to God upon it, just as the cross of Jesus would have served no purpose without the wondrous Sacrifice who was nailed there as our Substitute.

We turn to the first seven chapters of Leviticus for God's instructions concerning the offerings connected with the brazen altar; and as we read these sacred pages, in the light of the book of Hebrews, which interprets their meaning, we bow in reverence and awe before Him who "**loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**" (Revelation 1:5, 6).

When Israel left Egypt on that first Passover night, she turned her face toward the land of promise. She was saved by the sheltering blood that pointed on to Christ. She was delivered from the enemy by the mighty hand of God. But little did she know her own weakness, her own frailty. Little did she realize that before her lay forty years of sinning and wandering and murmuring against God and His servant, Moses, before she should possess the land promised to Abraham.

In the offerings and the sacrifices presented unto God at the brazen altar Israel's God was teaching her that there had to be a full atonement for sin, and that in the promised Saviour every need of the sinner was met.

Now that Christ has come to fulfill all the types and shadows set forth in the offerings and sacrifices for sin; even as we, too, are journeying on a pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan, so to speak, from this godless world to our heavenly home; we see our own frailties and weaknesses.

Then we look from ourselves to Him who was our all-sufficient Offering on the altar of Calvary; and we thank Him for His grace!

May His Holy Spirit teach us in this study some of the deep truths that add meaning to the message of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FIVE OFFERINGS

There were five offerings connected with Israel's worship of the Lord God. They show what the Son of God is to the Father, and "what He has become in grace to sinners." When viewed as a whole, they portray in shadow and in type the one perfect offering of Christ. When considered separately, they set forth the different aspects of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, as the Sacrifice sufficient for every need of the human soul.

The first three of these offerings are called by the Holy Spirit the "*sweet savour offerings*"; the last two, the "*non-sweet savour offerings*."

This classification by the Spirit of God can be readily understood from the names of the offerings themselves:

- (1) **The burnt offering;**
- (2) **The meat [meal] offering;**
- (3) **The peace offering;**
- (4) **The sin offering;**
- (5) **The trespass offering.**

The first three set forth the perfections which God the Father finds in the Lord Jesus; the last two portray Christ as the Sin Bearer for a guilty world.

In the sinless life of the Son the Father found delight; but when the Son became a Sin Offering, a curse for us, then the Father had to turn His face away from His well-beloved Son, while the Son uttered that heart-searching cry from the cross, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**"

He was, in that hour of darkness, the "*non-sweet savour offering*" for a guilty world.

Of all the prophetic pictures in the Mosaic Law concerning Christ's finished work on Calvary, the burnt offering presents the highest type.

- The burnt offering speaks to us of the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father was always well pleased.
- The peace offering presents God's righteousness in Christ as the only ground of fellowship between a holy God and His redeemed children.
- The meat [meal] offering, which was the only one of the five presented without blood, portrays the glory and beauty of the One "**altogether lovely**," upon whose Person the born again soul delights to feed.
- The sin and trespass offerings set forth the sinner's Substitute, not only for deliberate trespass against God and man, but also for the old, sinful nature with all its guilt inherited from Adam.

Christ, our Sin Offering and our Trespass offering, bore "**the wages of sin**" for us in His death, and gave unto us the free gift of "**eternal life**" (Romans 6:23).

It is significant that, when the Holy Spirit described these five offerings in the opening chapters of Leviticus, He began with the sweet savour offerings, which were a delight to God; yet when the sinner brought his sacrifice to the brazen altar, he reversed the order, presenting first the sin offering and the trespass offering.

He had to meet God on the basis of the blood shed for the redemption of sin before he could go on with Him in consecration and communion and fellowship. He had to know that his sins were washed away by faith in the promised Saviour before he could learn more and more of the beauties and perfections of His wonderful Person. But by faith in Him who was to come to put away sin and to pay the penalty “**once for all**,” the sinner in Israel could present unto a holy God his offerings that symbolized dedication and thanksgiving and communion with Him.

That is why he first brought the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Then, knowing that the penalty of his sin had been paid, in type, and that forgiveness for all his trespasses and iniquities had been granted, he brought to God the burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering in token of his desire to consecrate himself wholly to His service. Finally, with “**the peace of God, which passeth all understanding**” filling his heart, he had sweet fellowship and communion with Him as he presented unto Him the peace offering.

The priest in Israel had to offer sacrifices “**for his own sins**” (Hebrews 7:27). Then he ministered on behalf of others who brought their offerings to the altar, whether these were presented for the nation as a whole, or by a ruler of the people, or by any one of the congregation.

THE CREATURES USED IN THE OFFERINGS — TYPICAL OF CHRIST

One or more of five different animals or birds could be used in the offerings and sacrifices that were acceptable unto God:

- (1) a bullock or ox;
- (2) a sheep or lamb;
- (3) a goat;
- (4) a turtledove;
- (5) a young pigeon.

The bullock speaks to us of Christ the strong One, patient and faithful as the Servant of God, “**obedient unto death**” (Philippians 2:8).

The sheep and the lamb remind us of Isaiah’s description of our Lord’s meekness and submission to His Father’s will; for He was led “**as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb**,” so He opened “**not His mouth**” (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus was the Passover Lamb, “without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:19).

The goat is a picture of Christ, the sinner’s Substitute, bearing “**the iniquity of us all**” (Isaiah 53:6).

The turtledove and pigeon symbolize “*mourning innocence*,” and are “*associated with poverty*.” The fowls of the heavens also speak to us of the Heavenly One, who came down to offer Himself as our Sacrifice upon the altar.

If an Israelite was not rich enough to offer a lamb or one or the other more expensive sacrifices, he could present unto God two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Leviticus 5:7; 12:8).

Mary, the mother of our Lord, obeyed the command of Leviticus 12:8 when she took the Infant Jesus to the temple, and offered “**a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons**” (Luke 2:24). The offering of these birds, in any of the Levitical ceremonies, foreshadowed the coming into the world of the sinless Man of Sorrows, who, “**though he was rich**,” yet for our sakes “**became poor**,” that we “**through his poverty might be rich**” (II Corinthians 8:9).

Of course, no animal sacrifice, however perfect physically, could satisfy the holiness and the justice of God. But these Old Testament sacrifices and offerings were object lessons to God’s children to point them on to Jesus, “**the Lamb of God**,” “**without blemish and without spot**.” That is why the Holy Spirit said, in Hebrews 10:1-18, those wonderful words, part of which we quote just here:

“**The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year [i.e., on the Day of Atonement]. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he [Jesus] cometh into the world, he saith [in addressing His Father in heaven], Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.**”

That body of our Lord was “**prepared**,” in order that He might offer it as the all-sufficient Sacrifice on the cross. God cannot die; and He had to take upon Himself a human body, in order to suffer, in order to “**taste death for every man**” (Hebrews 2:9).

But let us continue reading our Lord’s prophetic words spoken to His Father concerning His own offering of His body upon the altar which was His cross:

“**In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) To do thy will, O God . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool . . . there is no more offering for sin”.**

This is a wonderful exposition of the Old Testament record concerning the Levitical offerings!

The Holy Spirit has made it all so very plain! And the words which we have just read are only a small part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, so rich and meaningful in its interpretation of the offerings that were presented to God upon the Jewish altar of burnt offering, just inside the gate of the court that surrounded the tabernacle.

It is well to bear in mind, as we enter upon a detailed study of each of the five offerings, that the explanation of the “**shadows of good things to come**” in much of the ministry of the high priest in the tabernacle, as set forth in Hebrews, has to do with the great Day of Atonement.

Later in these studies we want to consider the meaning of that greatest day in all the year for God’s people; but here let us remember that it represented the very best that Judaism could offer Israel; and the Holy Spirit was proving to the Hebrew Christians that Christ is far better than Judaism — better than the very best that the earthly high priest could do for the nation on the most sacred day of the year, when he went into the Holy of Holies with the blood of sprinkling, to represent his people before a holy God.

Since Christ, the Great High Priest, was so much better than the earthly high priest in his ministry on the greatest day of the year, then surely He was better than the earthly priest on every day of lesser importance to the spiritual life of the nation.

As we remember this very important point, the meaning of Hebrews becomes more clear. Even a little child, born again by the Spirit of God, could get the beautiful message it holds!

THE SIN OFFERING

In our study of the separate offerings, we begin with the first one brought by the guilty Israelite to be presented unto the Lord — the sin offering. God’s instructions concerning it are found in Leviticus 4:1-35; 6:24-30.

The first thing we note as we read these passages is that sins of ignorance did not excuse the sinner (4:2). The whole message of the sin offering is that “**all have sinned**,” and all need a Substitute, a Saviour.

- The priest had to bring his own sin offering (4:3);
- “**if the whole congregation of Israel**” sinned “**through ignorance**,” the sin offering had to be made (4:13);
- “**when a ruler**” sinned “**through ignorance**,” he was commanded to bring his offering for sin (4:22); and
- “**if any one of the common people**” did sin “**through ignorance**,” he was to sacrifice his sin offering unto the Lord (4:27).

Rich and poor, the self-righteous, moral man and the flagrant sinner — all possessed the old, sinful nature inherited from Adam.

And for all a Saviour had to die!

Although the different classes in Israel did not always bring the same animal for the sin offering, yet the ritual was practically the same. The sinner, of whatever class, was to present his own offering, thus recognizing his own individual guilt that, in type, was being laid upon his Substitute who was to come.

He took his offering “unto the door of the tabernacle . . . before the Lord,” publicly acknowledging his sin and his need of a Saviour.

He placed his hand upon the head of the innocent victim, figuratively identifying himself with the promised Sin Bearer, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

The priest sprinkled the shed blood “seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary,” and “upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord,” or “upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering.”

The blood was to be poured out “at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.” The fat was to be burned upon the altar of burnt offering; it was the Lord’s portion, well-pleasing to Him. But the flesh, bones, and skin, “even the whole bullock,” had to be carried without the camp “unto a clean place, where the ashes” were poured out; and there burned with fire.

None of these parts could be burned upon the altar; they had to be burned “without the camp.”

The sin offering thus became a graphic picture of the Lord Jesus, our Substitute, who, though He “knew no sin” in His holy Being, yet was “made sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21). He poured out His precious blood at the altar, which was His cross, when He “suffered without the gate” of Jerusalem, upon the accursed tree (Hebrews 13:10-12). After His death and resurrection, He ascended into heaven, and presented unto the Father “his own blood,” “the blood of sprinkling,” in that “more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands”; and “obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11, 12; 12:24).

As each individual in Israel had to present his own sin offering, so every sinner of all ages has to look to Jesus, the only Sin Bearer, for personal salvation. None can be saved for another; every sinner bears a personal responsibility before a holy God.

As each Jew had to place his hand upon the head of the animal sacrifice, confessing his sin, so every child of Adam has to confess before God and man, angels and demons, his need of a Redeemer, and identify himself with the Christ of the cross, if he would be saved.

As the sin offering had to be slain, so Christ had to die, a Substitute for the sinner; His holy, sinless life was not enough to save the guilty soul.

As the fire outside the camp consumed the sacrifice, so the fires of divine justice burned with awful fierceness as the Sin Offering died outside the city gate.

As the wind carried the ashes of the animal sacrifice away, so God will remember our sins no more forever, and as the earthly priest sprinkled the blood of the victim before the Lord, so Christ presented His own precious blood unto the Father in “**the holiest of all**,” even heaven itself.

The sinful Israelite was accepted before God by faith in the atoning blood of the Saviour who was to come, even as we are “accepted in the beloved” Son of the Father! “**Without the camp**” Christ died for our sins; “**within the veil**” He “**ever liveth to make intercession**” for us (Hebrews 7:25)!

Our suffering Saviour is our living Priest! The penalty of our sin is paid, for His atoning blood avails for all the endless ages!

In the Hebrew text the same word is used for “**sin**” and “**sin offering**.”

Thus the two were identified; and in this startling fact we realize, in some measure, the love of Christ, in that He was willing to “become sin” for us, though He Himself was absolutely, eternally “without sin.”

He suffered, “**the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God**” (I Peter 3:18). “**Being made a curse for us**,” He removed the curse of sin by paying the penalty Himself (Galatians 3:13). When He made His “**soul an offering for sin**,” He “**condemned sin in the flesh**,” and provided a ransom for the sinner’s soul (Isaiah 53:10; Romans 8:3).

“**Despised and rejected of men**,” our Saviour suffered for all our guilt, for all our sinful nature which we inherited from Adam, for all the iniquity of our wicked hearts! He died for us! He was our Sin Offering! He lives for us! He is our interceding Priest!

That is why Paul could say to the Jews of old,

“**Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses**” (Acts 13:38, 39).

That is why our redeemed hearts can sing, in the words of the old hymn:

“Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away one stain;

“But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away —
A Sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they!”

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

For the Scripture which tells of the trespass offering we turn to Leviticus 5:1-6:7; 7:17.

It is not easy to distinguish the sin offering from the trespass offering; for both represent Christ, the Substitute for the guilty sinner. The bodies of the offerings for both were burned without the camp of Israel, for the reason that we have already seen. Both were to atone for sins committed wittingly or through ignorance.

In the Lord Jesus Christ both the sin offering and the trespass offering found their complete and perfect fulfillment, in that He was the sinner's perfect Substitute on the cross.

While it is difficult to distinguish the sin offering from the trespass offering, as they "necessarily overlap"; yet in the former the penalty of sin was prominent; in the latter, atonement was made for the consequences of sin.

Christ, our Sin Offering, bore the guilt of our sinful nature; Christ, our Trespass Offering, made full and complete restitution to God and man for our acts of trespass against His holy law, both in our relationship to God and in our responsibility to our fellowmen.

"**Trespass**" means *the transgression of the rights of others*. And the trespass offering and its ceremony required a full reparation for every wrong act toward God and man.

As someone has said, the sin offering dealt with "*the nature of sin*"; the trespass offering, with the "*sins of nature*"; the sin offering, with "*the root of sin*"; the trespass offering with "*the fruit of sin*" in the life.

This is another way of saying that, while the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has been saved for time and for eternity by faith in the shed blood of the great Sin Offering, while he may have assurance of eternal salvation because of what Christ did in His finished work on the cross; yet in this present life the born again soul does not experience sinless perfection, because he still has the old, sinful nature.

That is what Paul meant when, in the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans, he wrote of the struggle between the old nature and the new nature in Christ, the flesh and the Spirit; the nature inherited from Adam and the new life received by faith in the Lord Jesus.

When Paul wrote those chapters, he gave expression to the struggle that every child of God knows — what he wants to do because he loves the Lord, he does not do; and what he does not want to do, he finds himself doing, in his weakness and frailty of the flesh. The climax of this bitter warfare between the flesh and the spirit is stated in the words,

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

But no sooner had the apostle uttered this cry than the Holy Spirit gave him the answer,

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25).

Then follows that wonderful eighth chapter of Romans, which gives the secret of victory over sin — even the indwelling Spirit of God. Thus every need of the sinner is fully met in Christ. He was our Sin Offering, paying the penalty of guilt and sin, justifying the sinner before a holy God.

And He is our Trespass Offering, giving power and victory over sin in our daily lives, even as He promised,

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

Christ, our Great High Priest, takes our confession and presents it unto the Father, who is **“faithful and just”** to cleanse and to forgive!

Sometimes Israel’s trespass against God was that of unwittingly eating the firstlings of the flock, which had to be set apart for God; sometimes it was in neglecting the tithe, which belonged to God. Sometimes the sin was against a fellow Israelite, such as stealing, defrauding another, or telling falsehoods.

For all trespasses there had to be:

- (1) confession of the sin;
- (2) restoration of any theft or fraud, with an added fifth part for restitution;
- (3) The presentation to God of the trespass offering at the brazen altar.

These trespasses against **“the holy things”** of God and against the rights of man had to be atoned for by the offering of the innocent victim, the substitute, which was but a faint picture of Christ, our Trespass Offering. Thus every claim which God had upon the offender was redressed, and the rights of man were restored — with a plus.

When the Lord Jesus suffered **“without the camp,”** outside the gate of Jerusalem, He atoned for the guilt of our sinful souls, as our Sin Offering; and as our Trespass Offering, He also atoned for our trespasses, our overt acts of disobedience toward God and our acts of iniquity toward our fellow creatures. He made expiation for all our sins; and He will one day give a regenerated world back to His Father — with a plus, with far more than He had in the beginning.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

He has forgiven us all our trespasses (Colossians 2:13). The consequences of our guilty acts, which condemn our own hearts as we think upon them — these He has put under the blood of His cross, if we truly love Him and trust in Him as our Trespass Offering. And we hear Him speak to us in reassuring words, saying,

“Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isaiah 6:7).

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psalm 32:1, 2).

Such forgiveness makes us bow before our holy God with repentance for the transgressions which sent Him to the cross; with thanksgiving for the love that “removed our transgressions from us . . . as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12). Such forgiveness and such love make us ashamed of our iniquities against God and man; make us want to be ever-increasingly well-pleasing in His sight and before a godless world, for His name’s sake.

Conscious of our weakness, of our failures, we sing, in the words of the prayer hymn,

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love
Here’s my heart; O, take and seal it:
Seal it for Thy courts above.”

THE BURNT OFFERING

The first of the three sweet savour offerings was the burnt offering, described in the first chapter of Leviticus. **“The law of the burnt offering”** is set forth in Leviticus 6:8-13.

There can be no doubt that it foreshadowed the offering of our Lord, in His sinless Person, well-pleasing unto the Father; for in Ephesians 5:2 we read,

“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

After sin had been confessed and put away, through the sin offering and the trespass offering, then the offerer brought his burnt offering, which was a picture of Christ’s perfect surrender to His Father in entire devotion and perfection, and of the Father’s delight in His sinless and well-beloved Son. The burnt offering was to be brought to the door of the tabernacle, in public worship on the sinner’s part, that he might be “accepted before the Lord” (Leviticus 1:3).

The offerer put his hand upon the head of the victim, thus identifying himself with the substitute. Then the offerer himself slew the sacrifice, whereas it was the priest who sprinkled the blood **“round about upon the altar.”**

All of this is highly significant. Only because we have been **“accepted in the beloved”** Son of God, can we stand before Him unashamed and unafraid. Christ is our Burnt Offering; and because we have put our faith in His atoning work for us, the Father sees us washed from all sin, cleansed **“whiter than snow,”** all our imperfections and guilt hidden forever from His sight, covered by His sheltering blood.

Having identified ourselves with the sinless Son of God by faith in Him, having acknowledged that our iniquities sent Him to Calvary, slew Him on the “**accursed tree**,” we must leave to Him the priestly work of sprinkling His precious blood, as it were, “**round about upon the altar**,” presenting His Burnt Offering unto the Father on our behalf.

And His death upon the altar, which was His cross, was as a “**sweet savour unto the Lord**.” His perfect life; His complete devotion to His Father’s will, all the beauties and wonders of His sinless Person — these made Him a delight to His Father in heaven. And we are “**complete in him**,” “**risen with Christ**,” “**accepted**” in Him! Our lives are “**hid with Christ in God**”! (See Colossians 2:10; 3:1, 2; Ephesians 1:6).

The offerer in Israel flayed the burnt offering; and the whole was burned upon the brazen altar.

Unlike the sin offering and the trespass offering, which were burned without the camp, the burnt offering was wholly consumed upon the altar. It was called “**the bread [or ‘food’] of God**.” In it God found delight and satisfaction. It was sometimes called “*the ascending offering*,” because the Hebrew word translated “**burnt offering**” means “*that which ascends*.” It ascended wholly to God, the Lord’s portion, none of which was to be eaten by the priests or by the offerer. It was presented “**to God**,” even as “**Christ . . . through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God**” (Hebrews 9:14).

It was the only one of the five offerings presented wholly unto God. Only the Father can fully appreciate the perfections of the Son!

The parts of the sacrifice were washed with water; and water is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Word of God. Every secret thought and intent of the heart of the Son of Man, during His earthly life, could stand the acid test of the holy Word of God. There was no sin in Him!

The skin of the animal sacrificed in the burnt offering was given to the priest. This is suggestive of the blessed truth that we are accepted before God because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, imputed unto us by His grace.

Adam and Eve were ashamed, and afraid of God while they wore the fig leaf aprons to cover their shame, for these represented the works of their own hands, the best that they could do to make themselves fit for His presence. But God made them “**coats of skins, and clothed them**” (Genesis 3:7, 8, 21). He shed the blood of the innocent victim, in order to provide for His sinning creatures a covering. Thus He pointed them on to the Lamb of God who was to come, whose shed blood was to provide a robe of righteousness that would make them fit for heaven and His holy presence.

The crop and the feathers of the fowls sacrificed for the burnt offering were plucked, a picture of our Lord’s laying aside His glory when He “**humbled himself**” to become Man and to die on the accursed tree, wholly obedient unto His Father’s will. He laid aside His glory for a time, but not His deity — no, not for one moment! He was “**Immanuel**,” “**God with us**”!

When the priests were set apart for their sacred office, when they first began their ministry in the tabernacle worship, a miracle took place, in that the fire upon the brazen altar came from God.

Of this we read in Leviticus 9:24:

“And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

It was God’s pleasure to consume the sacrifice, even as it is His meat and drink to accept the work and the Person of His Son. Christ Jesus, our Lord, fully satisfies the Father’s heart. Nor dared any earthly priest offer “**strange fire**,” lest he suffer judgment for his sin.

Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons, tried it; and “**there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord**” (Leviticus 10:1, 2). No manmade schemes for promoting worship, no manmade programs, can be pleasing to God. Only as the sinner looks to Jesus, the Burnt Offering, well pleasing unto the Father — only then is he “**accepted**” before God.

“The undying devotedness of Christ” is seen in the fact that the fire was ever to be kept “**burning upon the altar**”; it was never to “**go out**” (Leviticus 6:13) until the worthy Victim should come!

God sent the fire; then He commanded the priests to keep it ever burning upon the altar. Israel was to be reminded, day after day, year after year, century after century; that a holy God would accept him only on the basis of the sacrifice of the promised Saviour, who was to offer Himself “**without spot to God.**”

Thank God! The fire went out nearly two thousand years ago! Never again need our Saviour suffer! His whole Burnt Offering was “**once for all**”!

As we have seen, the burnt offering was placed first in the sacred record, because it was most precious to God.

Do we, my Christian friend, find our delight in meditating upon the beauties and perfections of the One “**altogether lovely**”? Or are we more concerned with His gifts?

The better we know Him, the more we love Him — for His Person alone.

As we think of all that He is, in His majesty and holiness and sinlessness and love, we stand amazed in His presence, to think that He should love us enough to die for us!

“Love moved Jehovah’s hand to smite;
Love moved the Son to bear:
How sweet on Calvary to stand!
The God of love is there.”

THE MEAL OFFERING

The meat [meal] offering, and the law of the meat [meal] offering are described in Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:1422. The translators of the King James Version rendered the word “**meat**” offering because in their day “**meat**” meant “*food*,” not necessarily flesh. Before we go into the spiritual meaning of this “**sweet savour offering**” unto the Lord, let us pause to read carefully these portions of Scripture which tell what God has said concerning it.

The meat [meal] offering really needs to be considered in connection with the burnt offering; for it was always linked with it, as many passages of Scripture show. (See Leviticus 23:12, 13, 18; Numbers 28:7-15; Judges 13:19). Christ, our Burnt Offering, satisfies the heart of the Father; Christ, our Meat Offering, satisfies the heart of God and the heart of man. And both were offered in consecration to the Lord God. Thus the Person and the work of Christ are linked together. He could die as the sinner’s Substitute only because He was sinless Man, as well as the eternal, all-powerful God of love.

The whole burnt offering was sacrificed unto the Lord upon the altar; whereas only a portion of the meat [meal] offering was burned with fire as “**a sweet savour unto the Lord**”; the remainder was food for the priests. In this we see how both God and redeemed men find delight in the beloved Son of the Father and only Saviour of sinners. This is communion!

We have already observed that the meat [meal] offering was the only one of the five that was presented without the shedding of blood. Thus it was typical of the Lord Jesus in His sinless life on earth. Yet the fire that consumed the meat [meal] offering spoke also of Christ’s obedience even unto death, as well as of the proof of His sinlessness, as evidenced through the fires of trial and persecution and sorrow which led to the cross.

His life was absolutely holy, “**altogether lovely**,” in its perfection; therefore, the meat [meal] offering, which foreshadowed His perfect humanity, became food for God, as well as spiritual food for the believer’s soul. Moreover, in Christ, our Meat Offering, we see the perfect pattern for the Christian to emulate; in this He taught us how to live for Him after we are born again.

He is “**the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**” (I Timothy 2:5).

We turn to the second and sixth chapters of Leviticus to find the ingredients that went into the preparation of the meat [meal] offering: fine flour, oil, frankincense, salt, and sometimes green ears of corn dried and offered with oil. Two items are mentioned that were not to be put in this offering; they were leaven and honey.

Significant truths are bound up in these passages of Scripture — truths concerning the things to be put into the meat [meal] offering, and truths concerning those to be left out of this “**sweet savour**” offering unto the Lord.

The fine flour speaks to us of the evenness and beauty of our Lord’s sinless life. There was not a coarse thread in any fiber of His Person. There was no roughness, no unevenness, in His Being.

He was “**holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens**” (Hebrews 7:26).

Oil was to be “**mingled with**” the fine flour or poured upon it; and oil in the Scriptures is always a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In His virgin birth the oil was “**mingled with**” the fine flour of His humanity. In His baptism by the Holy Spirit He was “**anointed**” with oil, as it were — born of the Spirit and anointed with the Spirit.

That our Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, we know from such passages as Isaiah 7:14 and the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Indeed, all Scripture truth stands or falls upon two eternal verities, one of which is the virgin birth of the Son of God — the other is His bodily resurrection.

But not only was Christ Jesus born of the Holy Spirit; He was also baptized with the Holy Spirit of God. He was “**anointed**” with “**the Holy Ghost and with power**” (Acts 10:38), for the Father gave “**not the Spirit by measure unto him**” (John 3:34). He was filled with the Spirit at all times, coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit of God. That is why He could live a sinless life, perform mighty miracles that only God can do, utter profound teachings which are divine, die in the sinner’s place as the spotless Lamb of God, rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven.

- He was eternal God “**manifest in the flesh**” (I Timothy 3:16).
- “**Through the eternal Spirit**” He “**offered himself without spot to God**” (Hebrews 9:14).
- He was “**declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness** [the Holy Spirit], **by the resurrection from the dead**” (Romans 1:4).

Of these fundamental truths the fine flour and the oil of the meat [meal] offering speak.

Now frankincense is a sweet gum which becomes most fragrant when burned with fire. It reminds us of the divine fragrance of the life of our Lord, tested by fire, only to appear all the more beautiful in His matchless love and compassion and holiness. All the frankincense had to be burned upon the altar, suggestive of the fact that only God could fully appreciate the inner fragrance of our Lord’s beautiful life.

As the fine flour symbolizes His perfect humanity; the oil, His eternal deity in His relationship to the Godhead; so frankincense, as it were, enabled Him to say to the unbelieving Jews concerning His relationship to His Father, “**I do always those things that please him**” (John 8:29). He was God incarnate; and in Him “**dwellmeth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**” (Colossians 2.9).

The Father’s voice spoke from heaven when the Son was anointed with the Holy Spirit, saying, “**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (Matthew 3:17). He was acknowledging before men, angels, and demons the fragrance of the sinless life of His beloved Son.

Salt was put into the meat [meal] offering, and salt is a preservative.

Our Lord's words were always "**seasoned with salt**," even as His Holy Spirit exhorted Christians, in giving "**an answer to every man**" (Colossians 4:6), to emulate His gracious example.

The officers whom the Pharisees sent to take Him prisoner returned with this striking statement, "**Never man spake like this man**" (John 7:46).

Humanly speaking, that was a strange excuse for officers to give for not obeying orders; but we know why they could not touch our Lord — not until His "**hour had fully come**" to offer Himself, a voluntary sacrifice upon the cross. His words were filled with "**grace and truth**." He Himself was the very embodiment of grace and truth. (See John 1:14). Even in His death His body "**saw no corruption**."

The prophet had foretold these very words; and both Peter and Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, applied them unmistakably to our Lord. (See Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-31; 13:34-37).

If only we, God's redeemed children, would heed His admonition to let our words be "**seasoned with salt**," we should be more like our sinless Saviour, and the salt would hinder the work of "**the leaven of malice and wickedness**" in our lives! To us the inspired Word says plainly,

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

No leaven and honey were to be burned upon the altar; and what a lesson God has for us here!

Leaven in the Scriptures is always a type of sin. The Israelites were to eat unleavened bread on the feast of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. They were even to put all leaven out of their houses. The Lord Jesus admonished His own to beware of "**the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees**" (Matthew 16:11, 12). And Paul warned against the "**leaven of malice and wickedness**" (I Corinthians 5:8). Just as there was no "**spot or blemish**" in the Passover lamb, so also there was no sin in Christ's holy nature — no leaven.

That is why the meat [meal] offering, which typified His sinless life, could have no leaven in it.

Honey, likewise, is typical of the sweetness of the natural man, the unsaved man, which appears in an attractive form to the godless world, but has nothing of the God-given, divine nature.

Honey, when tested by fire, ferments, then becomes sour; it will not stand the test. Yet the fires of suffering but served to show forth the sweetness of our Lord's divine nature, His unspeakable love! Fire makes frankincense more fragrant; it ruins honey.

The fires of suffering made manifest before men, angels, and demons the beauties and perfections of the Man of Sorrows; and in Him there was no taint of the sinful nature, of which the honey speaks. No wonder God expressly commanded Moses not to put honey or leaven in the meat [meal] offering!

Sometimes the meat [meal] offering was “**baken in the oven**,” reminding us once more of the unseen sufferings of our Lord. Sometimes it was “**baken in a pan**,” showing forth, in type, His “**more evident sufferings**.” Into the deeper agonies of Gethsemane and the cross no human soul can enter; yet enough of the suffering of our sinless Saviour is revealed to us to make us love Him for all eternity!

A handful of the meat [meal] offering was burned upon the altar, as a memorial, as the “**food of God**.” The remainder was eaten by Aaron and his sons. And here, again, we learn yet another beautiful lesson.

The priests had communion with God, feeding upon the same food as that which satisfied the Father’s heart. Even so, we are believer-priests, feeding upon the Bread of Life, our Lord Himself. He is manna to our souls, and He satisfies His Father’s heart. Thus we hold sweet fellowship and communion with our Heavenly Father, through the merits of His beloved Son and our Saviour. (See John 6:22-66).

To Moses God said, “**I have given**” the meat [meal] offering unto the priests “**for their portion of my offerings made by fire**” (Leviticus 6:17). And to us He has given His only begotten Son, to be food for our souls. The priests ate their portion of the meat [meal] offering in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. We enter by faith into “the holy place . . . not made with hands,” behold there our great Meal Offering; and our meditation of Him satisfies our hungry hearts (Hebrews 9:11, 12). May God help us to spend more time in His presence, finding our spiritual food in Him, the Living Bread!

THE PEACE OFFERING

In Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-21 we find the God-given instructions regarding the peace offering. It was placed upon the burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering, and presented to God last of all. With the sinner’s guilt covered by the blood of the promised Redeemer; with his transgressions forgiven; with the whole burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering having satisfied the heart of God, the Father, and having provided spiritual food for the redeemed sinner; then that man could know the blessed result of “**peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Romans 5:1).

His sins were covered by the precious blood of the sinless Substitute; he himself was “**accepted in the beloved**” Son of the Father; he was feeding his soul upon the Bread of Life; therefore, he could know “**peace with God**,” “**the peace of God**,” “**peace from God**”; yea, “**the God of peace**,” for He hath “**made peace through the blood of his cross**.” “**He is our peace**”! (See Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7; I Corinthians 1:3; Romans 15:33; Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:14).

In all of this we see yet another of the countless lessons God was teaching His people in Old Testament times concerning the meaning of the coming cross of Christ. At Calvary God’s holy law was vindicated and magnified; His holy Being was satisfied, and He could be “**just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**” (Romans 3:26). For “**God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself**” (II Corinthians 5:19).

Because the sinner is reconciled to God, he may have fellowship with Him.

That is why, in the peace offering, God received His portion; while the priest, the offerer, and his friends had their portion. The redeemed sinner held communion with God and with his fellow redeemed — all on the ground of Calvary's cross. There is no other basis for fellowship.

"The natural (unsaved) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

No man can make his peace with God. He is a bankrupt sinner, ashamed and afraid of a holy God, until he is reconciled to Him by the precious blood of Jesus. But in Christ, born again by His Holy Spirit, the child of God knows that all enmity is gone.

Christ is his Peace! And he finds his joy in communion with Him on the ground of His finished redemption.

Now different animals could be used as a sacrifice for the peace offering.

If taken from the herd, whether male or female, the victim symbolized Christ, the devoted Servant. The male suggests to us that He was the independent One; the female, the subject One, submissive to His Father's will. As in the burnt offering, the lamb portrayed the meek and unresisting Lamb of God; the goat, the sinner's Substitute. We may not all understand in like measure the marvels of the Person and work of our Lord.

Again, as in the other offerings, the laying of the hands upon the victim's head suggests identification of the sinner with the Sin Bearer; and substitution, in that Another was to die in his place.

Only a small portion was given to the Lord, to be burned upon the altar; and this portion was taken from the inward parts which could be reached only by the death of the victim. Likewise, only God, the Father and the Holy Spirit, could fully appreciate the hidden, secret emotions of the holy Son as He "**poured out his soul unto death**" (Isaiah 53:12).

"No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matthew 11:27).

The Lord's offering was burned upon the brazen altar; then the priest, the offerer, his family and friends partook of their portion.

Here we are made to think of the Lord's Table, where the redeemed child of God communes with his Heavenly Father by faith in the shed blood and broken body of the Lord Jesus. God and His people meet for sacred fellowship at that hallowed table. There "**Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other**" (Psalm 85:10).

The “**heave offering**,” presented with a vertical motion, was offered to God; the “**wave offering**,” presented with a horizontal motion, was eaten by His redeemed children.

The “**heave offering**” was the shoulder, which speaks to us of the omnipotent strength of Christ; the “**wave offering**” was the breast, suggestive of the love of Christ, realized by His children when, like John, they lean upon His breast.

As someone has expressed it, in Christ there is “rest for the weary,” and there is “strength for the weak.”

Ceremonial cleansing was required by God before the Israelite could partake of the peace offering. Nor can the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ worship God at the Lord’s Table while unconfessed sin lies upon his heart.

The eating of the peace offering by the Israelite had to be not later than the second day after the victim was slain at the altar; likewise, we dare not attempt to separate the Lord’s Table from the altar which was Calvary’s cross. To do so is but empty mockery!

No one who denies the efficacy of His atoning blood should presume to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

These are some of the spiritual lessons God would teach us through the peace offering.

His Word is filled with messages which speak peace to the believer’s heart. We quote only a few of these, which remind us yet further of Christ, our Peace Offering:

“You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: . . .” (Colossians 1:21, 22).

“Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13, 14)

He hath “**made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself**” (Colossians 1:20).

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” . . . (John 14:27).

“The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace” (Galatians 5:22).

“He shall be a priest upon his throne . . .” (Zechariah 6:13).

“The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means” (II Thessalonians 3:16).

“AT THE CROSS”

AS we “**behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29); as we meditate upon the significance of the Levitical offerings, which foreshadowed His coming into the world to fulfill the eternal purpose of the eternal God of love; as we think upon these things, we stand in wonder and awe and praise before the altar which was His cross. And beholding Him, we may well thank Him, in the words of the poet who wrote:

“Though all the beasts that live and feed
Upon a thousand hills should bleed,
Though all their blood should flow,
 The sacrifice would be in vain;
The stain of sin would still remain;
 Sin is not cancelled so.

“A better sacrifice than these
It needs, the conscience to appease,
 Or satisfy the Lord:
No blood hath virtue to atone
For man’s offence, but His alone,
Whose title is ‘The Word of God.’”

My unsaved friend, will you behold Him crucified for your sins; yea, risen and glorified and one day coming again to take His kingdom and His throne? Look to Him for eternal life, and share with Him His glory for all the endless ages.

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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